

REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank Examiner Nihir Patel of the United States Patent Office for the personal interview conducted on June 21, 2005.

In the Office Action mailed May 17, 2005, claims 1-5, 12, 13, 20 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Springett, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,234,171).

As discussed in the interview, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 defines over Springett as Springett does not disclose or render obvious a face mask with a baffle layer that has a plurality of projections that define a plurality of channels on the baffle layer that are configured for channeling fluid to different locations on the baffle layer. Support for this claim amendment may be found on at least page 11, lines 1-9 of Applicants specification.

As discussed, this structure is not disclosed or rendered obvious by Springett which instead discloses a particle containing layer 54 that is made from a meltblown microfiber web. Applicant respectfully submits that the meltblown web in Springett does not exhibit sufficient suppressive strength such that if the meltblown web were incorporated into the various molds set forth in Springett the pillowed low-density region 64 would flatten out as the meltblown web would not retain its shape during compression. Respectfully, the selection of the meltblown material for the layer 54 in Springett was done so as to provide for a layer that resists tearing during the molding process.

As such, Applicant respectfully submit that claim 1 defines over Springett and is in condition for allowance. Further, all claims that depend from claim 1 (claims 2-5 and 10) are also in condition for allowance. The rejections to claims 2-5 and 10 are made moot due to the allowance of claim 1.

Applicant has amended claim 2 in order to make the language of claim 2 consistent with that of claim 1.

As stated, claim 12 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of Springett. Applicant has amended claim 12 in order to call for the projections to define a plurality of channels on the layer configured for channeling fluid to different locations on the layer. Although not exact, the amendment made to claim 12 is similar to that

made to the amendment made above with respect to claim 1 and Applicant respectfully submits that claim 12 defines over Springett for essentially the same reasons as discussed above with respect to claim 1 and is in condition for allowance. Further, all claims that depend from claim 12 (claims 13, 15, 16, 20 and 25) are also in condition for allowance. The rejections to claims 13, 15, 16, 20 and 25 are made moot due to the allowance of claim 12.

Applicant respectfully submits that all claims are allowable and that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable action thereon is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at his convenience should he have any questions regarding this matter or require any additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

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